



Lympstone Entertainments

DRUMBEAT

essential reading for those who don't want to miss the best of What's On in Lympstone

THIS IS YOUR FINAL CALL FOR

Ian Keable, the magician with an entertaining comic twist, who returns in

MIRTH, MARVELS AND THE MYSTERIOUS

The Secret World of Charles Dickens

The show that had its première at the famous Charles Dickens Museum in London.

Charles Dickens was not only one of the world's greatest writers, but also a talented **magician** and fascinated by **spiritualism** and **ghosts**.

In this **humorous** and **mystifying** show, Ian Keable reveals this secret side of Dickens and recreates his **favourite tricks** and the **spooky practises** of the Victorian psychics.

A recent London review said: "*The Secret World of Charles Dickens* is enlightening, entertaining and engaging. It's a magic show balanced in educational reveals and mind-bending sleight-of-hand mysteries, with a spooky Victorian literary twist."

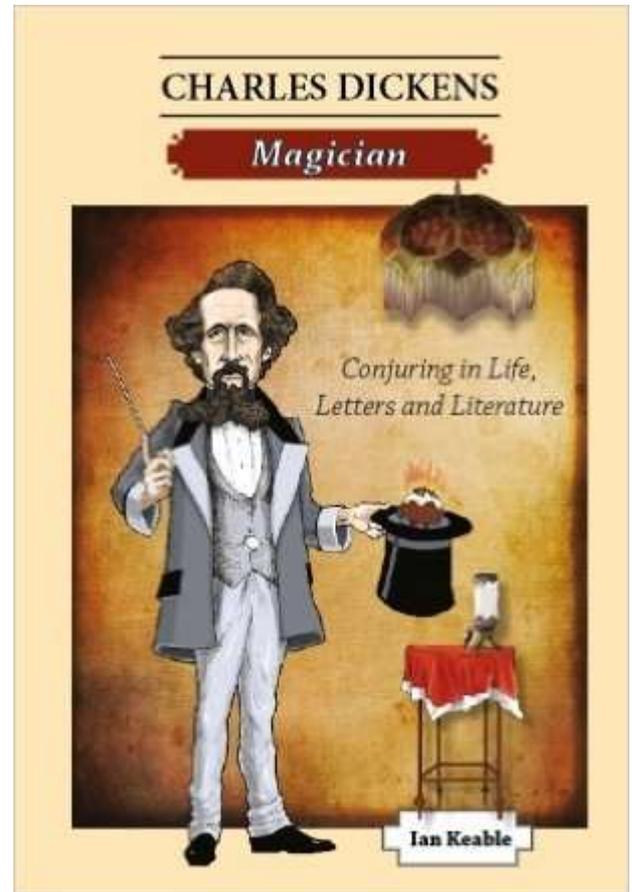
In another one can read: "A great combination of history and mystery, Ian's show engages and baffles all ages. His sleight of hand magic is among the best I've seen and the show seamlessly weaves a riveting history of some well known magic tricks with fascinating anecdotes about Dickens. Go and be amazed!" Or, in our case, *COME* and be amazed!

Saturday November 28th at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Doors and bar open at 7pm

Tickets £8, U16s £4. from the LympEnts Box Office c/o Demelza Henderson
2 Brookfield Cottages, The Strand. Telephone: 01395 272243 or 07516 322853

Presented with support from Villages in Action



Street poetry for Christmas

During December, look out for Harland's selection of seasonal verses on our poster sites around the village. Better still, if you have an appropriate poem you'd like to feature there, send him an email (harlandwalshaw@aol.com) or ring him on 263928.

THE LONG AWAITED RETURN OF THE CLARION CLARINET QUARTET

A long list of pieces greeted those who opened the programme for this, the first ‘home’ concert by the Clarion Clarinet Quartet for some years. But “Don’t worry, we’re not going to play of all of it!” announced quartet member Richard de la Rue – to audible disappointment from the crowd gathered in Lympstone Parish Church.

Richard and his fellow musicians John Walthew, Tim Whiter and John Welton, did nonetheless treat us to a wide variety of music, from an array of composers, ranging geographically all over Europe and straying over the pond to the USA, and in time from the 17th to the 20th century.

Unusually, the quartet began the second half with a request, playing ‘Petits Litanies de Jésus’ by Grovlez at the behest of an audience member who had been disappointed to find it omitted from the first half. The piece was arranged especially for the Clarion Quartet by Devon-born musician and composer Jaemus Downing. We were treated to Monti’s ‘Csardas’, apparently a recruiting dance for the Hungarian army, and an opportunity for these talented musicians to show off their skills with some fast and flashy runs - including on the bass clarinet!

Following a break for tea and cake – and presumably a chance for the players to get their breath back – the second half was all too short, but still encompassed a range of musical styles, including a couple of Scott Joplin rags, and ending all too soon with ‘Moonglow’, a lovely 1930s song by Hudson and DeLange. We’ll look forward to welcoming these talented musicians back again soon, perhaps to play some of those pieces we didn’t, after all, get to hear!

Grace Packman

When the Lympstone Mummers take their play round the village the weekend before Christmas, they will be reviving a revival of a revival of an old tradition. But what’s exciting, says Harland Walshaw, is that we have our own original Mumming Play.



Our mummers pictured performing at the Show of Hands Christmas Dinner in Topsham

The play was properly collected. One evening in the 1920s, 12-year-old Cyril Tuckfield* was visiting a friend. By the light of a paraffin lamp, the friend’s father, a fisherman called Tom Smith, told the boys about mumming in the village at the turn of the century. As the old fisherman reminisced, the boys became more and more excited. They also would go mumming!

Tom and another elderly fisherman, James Litton, together recalled most of the words of the old mummers’ play, and the boys wrote them down. That Christmas the local tradition was revived. Like the mummers of old they visited the bigger houses with their play, and for the three weeks around Christmas they had one, two or even three engagements every evening.

When I came to Lympstone 15 years ago, I was told of the village mumming play by the architect who was designing an extension for us, a member of the Exeter Morris Men. Like Cyril Tuckfield and his friend, I became excited by the thought of reviving the play. But I couldn’t find out about it, and gave up. A few years later I happened to mention my failure to Brian Ridge. “Oh,” he said, “I can let you have a script.” It turned out that the play had been revived already, in the 1980s, by the Players’ then chair, the redoubtable James Moss who assembled a starry cast, with Keith Exelby playing Father Christmas, John

Eaton-Terry King George, Tim Tapscott as the Turkish Knight, Ralph Rochester as Prince Valentine, Katie Rochester as Little Indian Black, and Ned Strouts as the Doctor. Oh to have seen that performance. (*it was indeed outstanding! Ed.*)

I teamed up with Tony Day, keeper of the folk flame in Lymptone, and we got a cast together. The 1920s and 1980s revivals had been for one Christmas only. Tony and I were determined to make it a Lymptone tradition once again. We have now performed it for eight years running.

Thomas Hardy writes about a village mumming play in *The Return of the Native*. Like the 19th century Lymptone fishermen, his mummers visit the big houses. His play, like ours, like most mumming plays, tells the story of St George (or, in our case, King George), and his battles with evil (or with England's enemies). Nobody knows how old the plays are, but they have been handed down orally. Many of the words are common to all plays. Hardy's Turkish Knight (a figure from the Crusades?) introduces himself by saying:

Here come I, a Turkish Knight,
Who learnt in Turkish land to fight,
almost word for word the same as our script.

The characters vary a bit, from play to play. The two characters perhaps unique to the Lymptone play are the French Prince Valentine, probably introduced during the Napoleonic Wars, and Little Indian Black, a reminder of the Raj.

There is much discussion of the costumes in the Hardy, and Cyril Tuckfield talks about Lymptone costumes in some detail. He followed instructions from the two surviving members of the old team, and was even able to use the costume that the 19th century King George had worn, a pale blue velvet coat, white breeches and lace cravat, carefully preserved by an old lady known to the village as Granny Norton. Today's costumes were devised and made by Pat Boaden.

Thomas Hardy discusses the difference between a tradition and a revival. In a revival, he says, all is excitement and fervour, whereas a survival is carried on with a stolidity and absence of stir which sets one wondering why a thing that is done so perfunctorily should be kept up at all.

The keen sense of pleasure that we mummers feel when we reassemble each year tells me that we are still taking part in a revival. One day, many years hence, when the players get together with a weary sense of having to do the old play for the umpteenth time, and wonder why they bother, then we shall know that the tradition has truly been re-established.

The Lymptone Mumming play will visit various Topsham pubs on the evening of Friday, 18th December, and the Lymptone pubs on Saturday, 19th December. As usual, a collection will be taken in aid of the Children's Society.

**Dr Tuckfield was born in Lymptone, and served in the Royal Navy during the war. He became a lecturer in Geography at Southampton University, and researched into the geomorphology of the New Forest.*

Village Concert 2016

Only 3 months to go now (27th February if you haven't already diared the date) and preparations are well in hand. Many of our most popular performers have signed up and are quite literally getting their act together. But there's still room for more talent and fresh faces are always welcome on the Lymptone stage. So, if you have a yen to sing a song, crack a joke or do any kind of turn – alone or in a group - don't be a shrinking violet: talk to Grace Packman (271856), Viv Day (268653) or Sheila Stone (274356) for more details and lots of encouragement!

Should LympEnts use Facebook to reach a wider audience?

If you think we should, and would like to attend a Villages in Action workshop on the subject on 24th November, speak to Sheila Stone (274356) asap.